

EuroTAP 2010 Tunnel Test

Chronology: Accidents in road tunnels since 1979

27 May 2010 in Austria

Because she fell asleep at the wheel, a motorist crashed into the left side of the portal of the Amberg tunnel near Feldkirch in Vorarlberg. She was trapped in her car and was seriously injured.

28 March 2010 in Switzerland

In a traffic accident in the Islisberg tunnel on the A 4 near Wettswil am Albis, two men were seriously injured when their car and trailer first touched the right shoulder, then crashed into a recess on the left side of the tunnel and finally crashed against the right wall.

11 March 2010 in Germany

In the Schönbuch tunnel on the A 81 between Stuttgart and Singen, a passenger car skidded on the icy surface in the entrance to the tunnel. Another vehicle crashed into the first car which turned over and came to a halt on its roof. In order to avoid a collision, a lorry driver was forced to crash into the tunnel wall. Two motorists sustained slight injuries.

13 February 2010 in Switzerland

In the Seelisberg tunnel on the A 2 between Lucerne and Göschenen, which at the time had bi-directional traffic due to construction work, a drunken driver veered onto the opposite lane and collided head-on with an oncoming vehicle. The oncoming vehicle was catapulted against the tunnel wall and turned over. Five people were injured.

11 February 2010 in Germany

Chaos in the Echinger tunnel on the A 96 between Greifenberg and Inning. A motorist driving in the right lane and probably trying to avoid a lump of ice lost control of her vehicle and drove into the tunnel wall. The vehicle came to a halt on the right emergency lane. While the motorist was in the emergency phone booth, another motorist slowed down on the right lane and also came to a halt. A lorry drove into the car, a second lorry was presumably pushed into this vehicle by an upcoming silo truck. Another two cars crashed into the accident site. The lorries became entangled and piled up to a height of four metres. One of the drivers was trapped in his cabin and seriously injured, three other people were also hospitalised with injuries.

10 February 2010 in Switzerland

Four tunnel accidents in the Swiss canton of Zurich in less than two hours, all of them close to the portal. In the Gubrist tunnel on the Zurich North Bypass, seven cars crashed into each other, in the Höchi tunnel on the A 53 near Uster, a car slid against the tunnel wall, another car crashed around one hour later in the same tube. Its driver sustained slight injuries. In the Bubenzholz tunnel on the A 51 between Zurich-North and Glattbrugg, a lorry crashed into the tunnel wall. This accident was caused

by weather conditions: Wet outside, dry in the tunnel, this often results in ice forming at the entrance to the tunnel. Salt is used, but in the case of light snowfall, low temperatures and due to the strong draughts that prevail in the tubes, the snow is blown far into the tunnel but does not combine well with the salt crystals.

29 January 2010 in Germany

In the Heslacher tunnel in Stuttgart, two accidents took place in succession. A motorist drove into a passenger car which was then pushed into the car in front. The motorist sustained slight injuries. While the accident was being reported, the same scenario took place on the opposite lane. Two people were slightly injured in this accident.

8 December 2009 in Germany

In a curve located 200 metres from the exit of the Hengstäcker tunnel in Stuttgart, a van veered onto the opposite lane and collided with an oncoming car; the five passengers in the car were injured, some seriously. The motorist who caused the accident sustained minor injuries.

14 September 2009 in Austria

In the Arlberg tunnel on the Arlberg motorway, a lorry driver veered onto the opposite lane and crashed against the side of a passenger car. A woman driver coming up behind was unable to avoid colliding head-on with the lorry. The woman died, two people were injured.

9 September 2009 in Austria

A six-year old boy, of all people, suffering from brittle-bone disease and on his way to receive treatment, was seriously injured in an accident in the Bosruck tunnel on the Pyhrn motorway. In a slow traffic queue, a passenger car drove into the minivan in which the family was travelling. The minivan crashed against the tunnel wall, turned over and came to a halt on its roof. The mother, younger brother and the motorist got away with no more than a fright, the grandmother sustained minor injuries.

26 July 2009 in Germany

In the Kohlberg tunnel between Erkheim and Stetten on the A 96 between Munich and Lindau, a 56-year old motorcyclist veered onto the opposite lane and collided with an oncoming lorry. The motorcyclist died, the lorry driver suffered shock.

28 June 2009 in Norway

A lorry and a small van collided in the middle of the Eiksund tunnel. Both cars caught fire immediately. Due to heat and dense smoke, it was a long time before the emergency services could reach the burning cars. Five young people died. The 7.7-kilometrelong Eiksund tunnel is 267 metres below sea level and is hence the deepest underwater tunnel in the world. It was opened early in 2008 and connects one of Norway's west-coast islands with the mainland.

26 May 2009 in Germany

In the Nollinger Berg tunnel on the A 861 between Lörrach and Rheinfelden, a woman driver had an accident and was flown to a clinic with life-threatening injuries. She had suddenly driven into an emergency bay where her car crashed against a wall, was spun across the lane and ended at the tunnel wall where the car then turned over. A burst tyre could have been the reason for this accident. The woman, who was probably not wearing a safety belt, was catapulted out through the windscreen onto the road.

16 May 2009 in Switzerland

A short distance before the exit of the Gotthard tunnel in Göschenen, a motorist veered onto the opposite lane and collided head-on with an oncoming vehicle. The motorist who caused the accident, as well as the driver and passenger in the other car, were seriously injured. Another vehicle was hit by flying vehicle parts resulting in injuries for two of the four passengers in this vehicle.

12 May 2009 in Austria

In the Pfänder tunnel on the Rheintal motorway near Bregenz, a lorry driver crashed into the end of a traffic jam and pushed one passenger car into the hazardous goods transporter ahead. Two passengers in the car sustained minor injuries.

27 March 2009 in Germany

In Munich's Petuel tunnel, a lorry driver was too late noticing the traffic jam ahead and drove into a lorry in front of him, pushing it into another lorry. The driver of the lorry in the middle was seriously injured, the passenger next to the driver who caused the accident sustained minor injuries.

24 March 2009 in Switzerland

Two cars collided head-on in the Gubrist tunnel on the A 1 near Zurich, injuring one woman driver seriously, and another slightly. At the time of the accident, construction work in the tube in the direction of St. Gallen meant that this twin-tube tunnel was running with bi-directional traffic in the tube in the direction of Berne.

23 March 2009 in Switzerland

In Mappo-Morettina on the A 13 near Locarno, a lorry driver drove his vehicle onto the opposite lane and crashed into three cars. The driver of the third car died on the spot, the driver of the second car sustained serious injuries, the driver of the first car and the lorry driver remained uninjured.

2 March 2009 in Austria

In the Plabutsch tunnel on the Pyhrn motorway in Steiermark, a motorist raced into a tunnel recess close to the north portal. The driver was flung out of the car and died at the scene of the accident. He had previously sent a suicide text message.

27 February 2009 in Austria

A 22-year old, also attempting to commit suicide, crashed head-on into the portal of the Amberg tunnel on the Rheintal motorway near Feldkirch and died.

25 February 2009 in Switzerland

In the Gubrist tunnel on the A 1 near Zurich, two cars collided and one caught fire. Four people were brought to hospital with suspected smoke poisoning.

18 January 2009 in Germany

Two tunnel accidents in one day in Berlin: In the Britzer tunnel on the A 100 city motorway, a 20-year old motorist lost control of his car and collided with the right tunnel wall and then crashed head-on into the left wall. He suffered shock and sustained light injuries. In the Tiergarten tunnel, a presumably drunken driver hit against the kerbside on the fast lane, losing control of his vehicle and crashing left and right against the tunnel walls. The driver was seriously injured.

17 December 2008 in Austria

In the Bosruck tunnel on the Pyhrn motorway between Upper Austria and Steiermark, two passenger cars collided head-on. The two drivers were very seriously injured. A lorry had pushed one of the two cars onto the opposite lane.

7 November 2008 in Austria

In the Mona-Lisa tunnel in Linz, in the early hours of the morning, a drunken 21-year old returning from a theft spree and driving through the old-town district of Linz veered onto the opposite lane and crashed head-on with an oncoming vehicle. His car turned over and came to a halt on its roof. The driver, his passenger and the driver of the other car were seriously injured. The passengers of another car involved in the crash remain uninjured. The motorist who caused the accident did not have a driving licence and was using his father's car unbeknownst to him.

20 July 2008 in Austria

In the Amberg tunnel on the Rheintal motorway near Feldkirch, a motorist travelling too fast collided head-on with a tunnel recess. He was fatally injured and died at the scene of the accident.

7 July 2008 in Austria

Also in the Amberg tunnel, a 22-year old motorist drove at full speed into the tunnel wall. The car was literally folded together. The driver was immediately dead.

6 July 2008 in Austria

In the Vösendorf tunnel on Vienna's outer ring motorway in Lower Austria, a car crashed into the left tunnel wall. The driver died on the spot, the passenger survived seriously injured.

5 July 2008 in Austria

In the Plabutsch tunnel on the Pyhrn motorway in Steiermark, a car crashed against the left tunnel wall. Both the driver and passenger died.

29 June 2008 in Italy

In the Banzole tunnel on the A 1 between Sasso Marconi and Pian del Voglio, a lorry caught fire. Several motorists left their vehicles and escaped through the portals. Nobody was injured.

23 February 2008 in Austria

In the Gleinalm tunnel on the Pyhrn motorway in Obersteiermark, a Hungarian articulated lorry drove at full speed into the back of a slow moving line of vehicles. Three cars were pushed together, injuring three people seriously; several people sustained slight injuries

18 January 2008 in Austria

In a mass pile-up in the Ofenauer tunnel on the A 10 Tauern motorway, three people were seriously injured and 14 slightly. Three lorries and 15 cars, including a police car, became entangled. According to first information, the accident was caused by extreme ice on the road surface near the tunnel exit.

29 November 2007 in Austria

In the Großliedl tunnel on the south motorway near Bad St. Leonhard, a lorry rammed a car from behind, sending it crashing into the tunnel wall. The 35-year old female driver of the completely demolished car was injured.

3 November 2007 in Belgium

In the Waasland tunnel in Antwerp, two cars collided head-on. Another two cars crashed into the accident site. Two people were seriously injured and one person sustained slight injuries.

12 October 2007 in the US

In a tunnel on Interstate 5, the main link between Los Angeles and San Francisco, in rainy conditions, two lorries collided on the wet surface and triggered a chain reaction. Another 13 lorries crashed into the accident site and caught fire. Flames shot 20 metres out of the portals, explosions were still to be heard hours after the accident took place. The enormous heat caused concrete to melt and fall onto the road, the fire brigade feared that parts of the tunnel would collapse. 20 people were able to escape the burning inferno on foot, ten of them were injured but only slightly.

18. September 2007 in Austria

Motorists had a close shave in a mass pile-up in the Ehrentalerberg tunnel on the A 2 (south motorway) near Klagenfurt involving a total of 14 cars and lorries. This accident was probably triggered when two lorries driving parallel came into contact with each other. Despite the "huge tangle of metal", to quote a witness, nobody was injured.

10. September 2007 in Italy

In the San Martino tunnel on the SS 36 near Lecco, a lorry crashed into the tunnel wall and caught fire. This triggered a mass pile-up. It took rescue services 45 minutes to arrive at the scene of the accident. This was too long. Two people died, ten people were taken to hospital suffering from smoke poisoning.

27. August 2007 in Italy

In the Tarviser Tunnel, a short distance from the border between Austria and Italy, on the Kanaltal motorway, a car skidded and crashed into the tunnel wall. A car coming up behind collided with the first vehicle. The driver of the first car died, her passenger was seriously injured. Both passengers in the other car, a mother and her young daughter, sustained slight injuries.

10. May 2007 in Austria

In the Pfänder Tunnel on the A 14 near Bregenz, a German lorry swerved onto the opposite lane and collided head-on with an articulated lorry from the Czech Republic which then blocked the traffic lane. A motorbike and another car crashed into the lorry. The motorcyclist and his passenger were seriously injured, the two motorists sustained slight injuries.

23. March 2007 in Australia

A rear-end collision in the 3.5 kilometre long Burnley Tunnel in Melbourne caused a mass pile-up involving three lorries and four cars – and one explosion. At least three people died in the ball of fire, hundreds of motorists were able to escape on foot.

19. January 2007 in Austria

A mass pile-up in the Ehrentalerberg tunnel on the A 2 near Klagenfurt in which 29 cars, nine lorries and a bus collided. Twelve people were injured, none of them some seriously. Around 150 people were able to leave the tunnel safely. It took twelve hours to clear all the vehicles. The accident was caused by single drops of wood or clear varnish which were spread by vehicles driving over them and which transformed the carriageway into a surface that was as slippery as ice.

24. December 2006 in Germany

In the Farchanter Tunnel on the B 2 near Garmisch-Patenkirchen, a woman driving a van that had been converted to a mobile home left the carriageway, the vehicle skidded and then turned over. The woman driver suffered fatal injuries. All tunnel users were requested to leave the tunnel immediately because rescue services feared that the bottles of gas in the mobile home might explode.

17. December 2006 in Austria

At the entrance to the Tauern tunnel on the A 10 between Villach and Salzburg, a coach collided with a lorry. The coach carrying 50 passengers turned over. 30 people were injured.

21. November 2006 in Switzerland

In the Crapteig tunnel near Thusis in the Swiss canton of Graubünden, a German articulated lorry carrying wood panels caught fire. The tunnel was shut down immediately, nobody was injured. According to first findings, this accident was caused by technical problems.

9. November 2006 in Germany

In the east tube of Hamburg's Elb tunnel, a bus ran into a lorry and another lorry crashed into the accident site. Eight people were injured.

2. November 2006 in Switzerland

In the Gotthard tunnel on the A 2 between Lucerne and Chiasso, a car veered into the opposite lane and collided with an oncoming lorry. Another two lorries then crashed into the accident site. The motorist died, two HGV drivers were injured.

26. October 2006 in Norway

In the Eidsvoll tunnel near Oslo, a car collided head-on with a tank lorry. The lorry caught fire immediately. The motorist died in the accident, the lorry driver was able to escape injured.

16. September 2006 in Switzerland

In the Viamala tunnel on the A 13 south of Chur, a car swerved, grazing an oncoming coach carrying an ice hockey team from Tessin. This caused the bus to skid along the tunnel wall and catch fire. Another car crashed into the bus. The two cars also caught fire. The terrible outcome: nine dead and five injured.

25. July 2006 in Austria

A lorry driver from Kassel travelling through the Spering tunnel on the Pyhrn motorway in Upper Austria swerved onto the opposite lane and collided head-on with an oncoming lorry. The driver from Kassel died.

25. December 2005 in Germany

On entering a tunnel on the B 31 near Eriskirch in the Lake Constance district, a car skidded and collided with an oncoming car and the tunnel wall. The vehicle caught fire, four people aged between 18 and 23 burned to death, a fifth victim was hurtled from the vehicle and also died.

20. August 2005 in Switzerland

In the Isla-Bella tunnel on the A 13 between Chur and Bellinzona, two cars grazed each other. One of the cars ended up on the opposite lane where it collided with a bus. One woman died, two people were injured.

17. August 2005 in Austria

In the Roppener tunnel on the Inntal motorway (A 12) in Tirol's Oberland, a minibus drove into a lorry travelling on the opposite lane. The driver died.

6. June 2005 in Germany

In Hamburg's Elb tunnel, a coach carrying more than 40 children crashed into a lorry which had come to a halt due to congestion. Although an empty double-decker bus coming up behind was able to stop in time, a lorry crashed into this bus, pushing the vehicles together. All in all, 24 people were injured, including 20 children.

4. June 2005 in France

In the Fréjus tunnel on the A43/ A32 between Chambéry/ France and Turin/ Italy, a lorry carrying tyres caught fire. The flames spread to three other lorries. Two people died, seven suffered smoke poisoning. The around 13 kilometre long border tunnel between France and Italy, which was opened in 1980, is one of the most important Alpine axes for heavy duty traffic.

14. April 2004 in Switzerland

300 metres from the exit of the Baregg tunnel on the A 1 between Zurich and Basel, a lorry drove at full speed into the back of a passenger car and two lorries which had come to a halt following a pile-up. The passenger car was completely crushed and caught fire. The fire subsequently spread to one of the lorries. The driver of the car died, five people were injured. A fatal accident had already occurred on Easter Monday in this tunnel: A motorcyclist was hit and run over by a car. Then on 16 April, six vehicles were involved in a pile-up. Thankfully nobody was injured in the collision.

16. August 2003 in Switzerland

An Italian lorry collided head-on with a German car in the Gotthard tunnel. The driver of the car died, the four passengers and the lorry driver were seriously injured. The lorry had veered into oncoming traffic.

7. June 2003 in Turkey

Near Erzincan, a Turkish bus crashed into a tunnel portal. There was no trace of skid marks whatsoever. 27 people died, including the driver.

7. June 2003 in Italy

Near Vicenza, a German coach collided with the crash barrier of a tunnel. Six people, including one child, died, 38 were injured, some seriously.

24. October 2001 in Switzerland

A fire was caused by a head-on collision involving two lorries in the Gotthard tunnel on the A 2 between Göschenen and Airolo. Eleven people lost their lives in this disaster.

17. October 2001 in Denmark

In the Danish Guldborgsund tunnel between Copenhagen and the ferry port of Rødby, a lorry drove into a car in thick fog and caused a mass pile-up. Five people died, nine were injured, some seriously.

31. August 2001 in Austria

Three tunnel accidents in a single day resulted in two dead and nine injured. One woman was seriously injured when her car crashed into the portal of the Sonnstein tunnel on the B 145 near Traunkirchen in Upper Austria. In the Lainberg tunnel on the A 9 near Windischgarsten in Austria, two Austrians were killed and two Germans injured in a head-on collision. In the Katschberg tunnel on the A 10 near St. Michael in Lungau six people were injured in a collision.

26. August 2001 in Switzerland

A head-on collision occurred in the Gotthard tunnel on the A 2 between Göschenen and Airolo. Six people were injured, some seriously.

13. August 2001 in Austria

Near Klagenfurt in Kärnten, an Italian coach carrying 30 Polish pilgrims crashed into the portal of the Reigersdorf tunnel. 24 people were injured, some seriously.

8. August 2001 in Austria

In the Amberg tunnel on the Rhine Valley motorway (A 14) between Frastanz and Feldkirch, an Austrian coach and a van, also from Austria, collided. Several approaching vehicles were caught in the subsequent pile-up. Three people died.

6. August 2001 in Austria

In the Gleinalm tunnel on the Pyhrn motorway (A 9) north of Graz, two cars collided head-on. They caught fire immediately. Five people died, including one small child. The four injured people who were rescued included a child who sustained 70 percent burns and two children aged three and five who suffered head injuries and smoke poisoning.

12. April 2001 in Austria

In the Helbersberg tunnel on the Tauern route, a rear-end collision resulted in a mass pile-up. A fire did not break out, but two people died and ten were injured.

29. May 1999 in Austria

A fire broke out in the Tauern tunnel following a rear-end collision. A lorry carrying paint exploded. 24 vehicles subsequently caught fire, turning the tube into a furnace in which 12 people lost their lives. It took 16 hours to get the fire under control.

24. March 1999 in France / Italy

A Belgian lorry carrying flour and margarine caught fire in the Mont Blanc tunnel. A lighted cigarette end caused this fire. The fire quickly spread and was not extinguished until 24 hours later. 39 people died in the fire.

18. March 1996 in Italy

After a rear-end collision, a tank lorry exploded in a tunnel near Palermo. 19 cars caught fire. Five people died, 26 people were injured.

10. February 1996 in Japan

On the island of Hokkaido, a huge boulder weighing 50,000 tonnes crashed onto a tunnel tube. It took rescue services several days to reach the accident site. 20 passengers died.

10. April 1995 in Austria

In a mass pile-up in the Pfänder tunnel near Bregenz, four cars caught fire. Three people died. A motorist driving into incoming traffic was the cause of this accident.

3. November 1982 in Afghanistan

In the Salang tunnel north of Kabul, a Soviet army convoy truck collided with a tank lorry. The explosion triggered an inferno. 700 to 2,000 people suffocated and were burned.

7. 7 April 1982 in the US

In the Caldecott Tunnel near Oakland, California, seven people died in a mass pile-up.

11. July 1979 in Japan

In a collision involving several lorries and cars in the Nihonzaka tunnel, seven people lost their lives.

Stand: 23. June 2010